United Nations A/RES/58/159

General Assembly

Distr.: General
2 March 2004

Fifty-eighth session
Agenda item 115

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[*on the report of the Third Committee (A/58/506)*]

58/159. The incompatibility between democracy and racism

The General Assembly,

Guided by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[1] the Charter of the United Nations, the International Covenants on Human Rights[2] and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination,[3]

Recalling the commitment reached in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights on 25 June 1993,[4] concerning the elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance,

Recalling also the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted by the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance on 8 September 2001,[5]

Taking note of Commission on Human Rights resolution 2003/41 of 23 April 2003,[6]

Mindful of the responsibility of Governments to ensure such equality as is established in the relevant international and regional human rights instruments, inter alia, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants on Human Rights and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination,

Reaffirming that acts of racial violence and discrimination do not constitute legitimate expressions of opinion, but rather are offences,

Alarmed by the rise of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in political circles, in the sphere of public opinion and in society at large,

---

[1] Resolution 217 A (III).

[2] Resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

[3] Resolution 2106 A (XX), annex.

[4] A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III.

[5] See A/CONF.189/12 and Corr.1, chap. I.

[6] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2003, Supplement No. 3* (E/2003/23), chap. II, sect. A.

Recognizing the fundamental role of education and other active policies in the promotion of tolerance and respect for others and in the construction of pluralistic and inclusive societies,

1. *Condemns* political platforms and organizations based on racism, xenophobia or doctrines of racial superiority and related discrimination, as well as legislation and practices based on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance as incompatible with democracy and transparent and accountable governance;

2. *Affirms* that racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance condoned by governmental policies violate human rights and may endanger friendly relations among peoples, cooperation among nations, international peace and security and the harmony of persons living side by side within one and the same State;

3. *Affirms also* that any form of impunity condoned by public authorities for crimes motivated by racist and xenophobic attitudes plays a role in weakening the rule of law and democracy and tends to encourage the recurrence of such acts;

4. *Condemns* the persistence and resurgence of neo-Nazism, neo-fascism and violent nationalist ideologies based on racial or national prejudice, and states that these phenomena can never be justified in any instance or in any circumstances;

5. *Recognizes with deep concern* the increase in anti-Semitism and Islamophobia in various parts of the world, as well as the emergence of racial and violent movements based on racism and discriminatory ideas against Arab, Jewish and Muslim communities, as well as communities of people of African descent, communities of people of Asian descent and other communities;

6. *Emphasizes* that the elimination of all forms of discrimination, especially gender, ethnic and racial discrimination, as well as diverse forms of intolerance, the promotion and protection of the human rights of persons of indigenous origin and members of indigenous communities and migrants, and respect for ethnic, cultural and religious diversity contribute to strengthening and promoting democracy and political participation;

7. *Urges* States to reinforce their commitment to promote tolerance and human rights and to fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance as a way to strengthen democracy, the rule of law and transparent and accountable governance, and in that regard recommends measures such as introducing or reinforcing human rights education in schools and in institutions of higher education;

8. *Also urges* States to ensure that their political and legal systems reflect the multicultural diversity within their societies and, where necessary, to improve democratic institutions so that they are more fully participatory and avoid marginalization and exclusion of, and discrimination against, specific sectors of society;

9. *Underlines* the key role that political leaders and political parties can and ought to play in strengthening and promoting democracy by combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and encourages political parties to take concrete steps to promote solidarity, tolerance and respect, inter alia, by developing voluntary codes of conduct, including internal disciplinary measures for violations thereof, so their members refrain from public statements and actions

that encourage or incite racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;

10. *Invites* the Inter-Parliamentary Union and other relevant inter-parliamentary organizations to encourage debate in, and action by, parliaments on various measures, including laws and policies, to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;

11. *Invites* the mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights and the treaty bodies to continue to pay particular attention to violations of human rights stemming from the rise of racism and xenophobia in political circles and in society at large, with due consideration to a gender perspective, especially as regards their incompatibility with democracy;

12. *Takes note* of the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the incompatibility between democracy and racism;[7]

13. *Also takes note* of the outcome of the expert seminar on the interdependence between democracy and human rights, held by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights at Geneva on 25 and 26 November 2002;[8]

14. *Invites* the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance to submit to the General Assembly the study on the issue of political platforms that promote or incite racial discrimination, as requested by the Commission in its resolution 2003/41,[6] and updated and expanded as appropriate;

15. *Decides* to continue consideration of the matter at its fifty-ninth session under the item entitled "Elimination of racism and racial discrimination".

77th plenary meeting
22 December 2003

[7] E/CN.4/2003/62 and Add.1.

[8] See E/CN.4/2003/59.